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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

DEC 12 2011

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Thank you for your letter of November 18, 2011, regarding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Lyme disease research program. I am pleased to respond to your request for information.

As you are aware, NIH has a long-standing commitment to research on Lyme disease. Related research is supported by several NIH Institutes and Centers. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) leads this NIH effort, supporting a strong and diverse Lyme disease research portfolio that encompasses basic, translational, and clinical research conducted by extramural and intramural investigators.

The major goals of the NIAID Lyme disease research program are to develop better means of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. To accomplish these critical objectives, NIAID's Lyme disease research portfolio includes studies on microbial physiology; molecular, genetic, and cellular mechanisms of pathogenesis; mechanisms of protective immunity; animal models of disease, including studies of persistence and immune evasion; vectors and their influence on the transmission of disease; and discovery and characterization of novel vaccine targets. The NIAID Web site provides detailed information about NIAID's current Lyme disease efforts at http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/lymeDisease/Pages/lymeDisease.aspx.

NIAID recognizes the urgent need to develop simple and rapid tests to diagnose infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease, and is committed to improving Lyme disease diagnostics by supporting innovative research projects. NIAID-supported studies include efforts to improve the accuracy of current antibody-based blood diagnostics for Lyme disease. NIH intramural investigators are continuing the development of a new test that has the potential to be used as a high-throughput screening tool for identifying antibodies against *B. burgdorferi*. Additional NIAID studies investigate Lyme disease markers that could help healthcare providers determine when a patient has cleared an infection. Several clinical studies investigating Lyme disease are ongoing at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Information about clinical studies can be found at http://clinicaltrials.gov and at http://www.cc.nih.gov.

Additional information about NIH support for Lyme disease research can be found through the NIH Research, Condition, and Disease Categorization (RCDC) database (http://report.nih.gov/rcdc/categories). The RCDC database includes the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools Expenditures and Results Web query tool

(http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm) that will enable you and your constituents to obtain more detail on NIH Lyme disease research including project abstracts, funding information, publications, and patents associated with NIH-supported research projects.

I hope that you find this information helpful. Thank you for your interest in and continued support for the NIH.

Sincerely yours, with best personal regards

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director